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DEPARTMENT FOR T HUMPHREY
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SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S PLAN TO PURSUE NUCLEAR ENERGY

REF: A. 08 STATE 127423

1B. 08 ABUJA 2397

1C. 07 ABUJA 1121

Classified By: Deputy Economic Counselor Tony Fernandes for reasons
1.4 (B & D).

11. (U) Post provides the following response per reftel request.

12. (C) The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) is the agency empowered to regulate nuclear activities in Nigeria, while the Nigerian Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) is entrusted with research and development of nuclear power for civilian use. The responses provided herein are garnered from post's records and from information elicited from the NNRA and NAEC and are keyed to corresponding questions in reftel.

-- (Q) Describe any plans for development of nuclear power in your country. Also describe any existing or planned nuclear power related activities in your country, such as uranium mining, if any. Do you foresee an expansion of these facilities?

-- (A) Nigeria has a nascent nuclear program for electric power generation under the auspices of the NAEC, which is guided by a 2008 adapted Framework for the Deployment of Nuclear Electricity. There are three nuclear research facilities owned by the NAEC and regulated by the NNRA that conduct rudimentary and basic nuclear research:

-- The Center for Energy Research and Training (CERT) at Ahmed Bello University in Zaria, Kaduna State.

-- The Center for Energy Research and Development (CERD) at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Osun State.

-- The Nuclear Technology Centre in Sheda, Abuja is an irradiation facility that treats various food and nonfood items.

-- The NNRA-owned National Institute for Radiation Protection and Research, located in Sheda, Abuja is mandated to conduct training in radiation detection and recovery.

All of these institutions are at their infancy and lack technical and scientific capacity as well as resources to establish a viable nuclear program. Currently, there is no plan to expand these facilities.

-- (Q) If your country is considering the pursuit of nuclear power, describe the underlying motivation.

-- (A) Nigeria suffers from a severe shortage of electricity and experiences frequent blackouts even in major population centers. The severe electricity shortage limits economic activity and hinders Nigeria's ambitions to develop its economy and fight poverty.

-- (Q) If there are plans to pursue nuclear power, describe the anticipated government role in the financing of civilian nuclear sectors.

-- (A) According to the NNRA, the focus at this stage is to strengthen the existing legal framework, develop the scientific and technical expertise necessary for its nuclear program, and conduct basic research. NAEC anticipates that the government will finance and operate any future projects and eventually open it to the private sector.

-- (Q) What are the names and titles of key nuclear decision making government bodies and top officials?

-- (A) The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) is headed by Professor Shemseeden Elegba, and it is the governmental arm that regulates civilian nuclear activity. The Nigerian Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC) is headed by Dr. Franklin Erepamo Osaisai, and is entrusted with research and development of nuclear power for civilian use.

-- (Q) Does your country have a nuclear regulatory authority?

-- (A) Yes, the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority. It has licensing, inspection and enforcement authority over radioactive material users: the oil and gas industry, mining and manufacturing industry, health facilities, education and research institutions, and nuclear installations. The NNRA is a small agency that employs around 100 people of which 30 are inspectors.

-- (Q) Does your country have an existing domestic nuclear liability

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law?

-- (A) No, but Nigeria is a party to the Vienna Convention on Civil Nuclear liability, and the NNRA is advocating for the National Assembly to adopt a nuclear liability law.

-- (Q) Is the manufacturing base in your country (including high-tech components and heavy industry) involved in nuclear related products and services.

-- (A) No. The manufacturing industry is a limited user of some radioactive materials but is not involved in nuclear related products and services.

-- (Q) How extensive is your country's nuclear nuclear-trained force?

-- (A) Nigeria has very few nuclear-trained experts and does not have a significant engineering, technician, and construction base that can be readily converted into a nuclear workforce. As a result, the development of civil nuclear power will require the use of a significant foreign workforce.

Opportunities for U.S. Industry

-- (Q) Does your country have any current or anticipated nuclear related tenders?

-- (A) According to the NNRA and NAEC, Nigeria currently does not have any nuclear related tenders and does not expect to issue one anytime soon.

-- (Q) What nuclear sector opportunities do you foresee for U.S. industry?

-- (A) Given the infancy of the Nigerian nuclear program, the opportunities are in feasibility studies and in the area of building technical and human capacity.

Foreign Competitors

-- (Q) Are there any nuclear supplier countries engaged in your country? Please describe any available details on formal agreements including existing or potential (1) MOUs on nuclear cooperation; (2) legal framework for nuclear commerce, or (3) arrangements for technical and information exchanges.

-- (A) Radioactive materials (primarily for use in the oil and gas industry, and health facilities, etc) are imported from the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, South Africa, and South Korea. Nigeria does not have a legal framework for nuclear commerce. It receives technical assistance from the International Atomic Energy Agency in developing its legal, technical, and scientific capacity for the development and peaceful use of nuclear power.

(Q) -- Are there any political considerations your country may take into account when choosing to cooperate with competing nuclear supplier states?

(C) (A) -- An Iranian nuclear delegation visited Nigeria in September 2008, but there is no confirmation if any form of cooperative agreement was concluded. As reported in Ref B, a highly placed GON source in the energy sector has recommended against collaboration with Iran given doubts about the latter's capabilities in the nuclear sector and due to its pariah status in the international community.

¶3. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.

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